

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
DOTE-00 CG-00 L-03 EB-08 /034 W
-----061802 191859Z /62
R 182122Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 337
INFO SECDEF WASH DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 0128

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL MASS BF TK US
SUBJ: BASE COMMANDERS CONFERENCE, BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS
ISLANDS

REF: 77 NASSAU 1978

1. SUBJECT CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT EMBASSY ON 16 JANUARY
1978 AND WAS CONSIDERED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS TO BE INFORMATIVE
AND USEFUL.

2. DEPARTMENT AND DEFENSE SHOULD BE AWARE OF THREE ITEMS
THAT WERE BROUGHT OUT IN THE CONFERENCE:

A. THE SEABEES CURRENTLY DEPLOYED TO HAVFAC ELEUTHERA
ARE COMMENCING SEVERAL HIGH COST, HIGHLY VISIBLE CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS SUCH AS RESURFACING THE AIRFIELD RUNWAY, REFURBISHING
THE PIER, AND RESURFACING THE BASE ROADWAYS. THE COST OF
RUNWAY RESURFACING ALONE IS REPORTEDLY IN EXCESS OF \$800,000.
EMBASSY WOULD HOPE THAT WASHINGTON HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED
THESE PROJECTS WITH RESPECT TO OUR CURRENT NEGOTIATING
POSTURE AND FACT THAT WE TOLD GCOB IN OUR DECEMBER 1975
QUID OFFER THAT OVER THE 15YEAR LEASE PERIOD WE HOPED
TO OBTAIN, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO UNDERTAKE
CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE FACILITIES, SUCH AS PORT
IMPROVEMENT AND HARBOR DREDGING, ESTIMATED TO PROVIDE
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THE BAHAMIAN ECONOMY BENEFITS TOTALLING APPROXIMATELY
\$15 MILLION. IT IS NOT CLEAR TO EMBASSY WHETHER THESE
IMPROVEMENTS WERE CALCULATED INTO THE QUID FIGURE AND
WE SUGGEST THAT GCOB MIGHT ALSO BE UNCLEAR ON THIS POINT.
IN ANY CASE, SUCH ACTIVITY DEFINITELY RUNS THE RISK OF
INDICATING OUR WILLINGNESS TO STAY AT ANY PRICE THAT MIGHT BE
DEMANDED AND IS INCONSISTENT WITH OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS AUTEC

WHERE IMPROVEMENT FUNDS HAVE BEEN WITHHELD IN WASHINGTON DUE TO LACK OF AN AGREEMENT WITH GCOB. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT.

3. THE SECOND ITEM IS THAT THE LORAN STATION, SAN SALVADOR IS BEING SCHEDULED FOR CLOSURE BY USCG IN 1980. EMBASSY WISHES TO BE CERTAIN THAT WE HAVE CONSIDERED THIS FACT IN OUR QUID DETERMINATION.

4. THE FINAL ITEM IS THAT ALL FACILITIES IN THESE ISLANDS (EXCEPT THE LORSTAS) RECEIVE THEIR BULK LOGISTICS SUPPORT VIA SMALL FREIGHTERS UNDER CONTRACT TO MSC AND WORKING OUT OF PORT CANAVERAL, FLORIDA. DUE TO THE DETERIORATING QUALITY AND FREQUENCY OF THIS SERVICE (WHICH EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS IS UNDER REVIEW BY MSC) SEVERAL FACILITIES HAVE EXPERIENCED SHORTAGES AND/OR DANGEROUSLY LOW LEVELS OF FOOD, FUEL AND SUPPLIES ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. A PARTIAL RELIEF OF THESE SITUATIONS COULD BE OBTAINED IF FACILITIES COULD CONTRACT FOR AND PROCURE, LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SUCH PRODUCE COULD BE OBTAINED ON SOME ISLANDS (PARTICULARLY ANDROS AND ELEUTHERA) FROM THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED FARMERS COOPERATIVES AT LESS COST FOR COMPARABLE QUALITY THAN WE ARE NOW PAYING TO SHIP FROM PORT CANAVERAL. THIS PROCEDURE WOULD HAVE THE ADDITIONAL BENEFIT OF INCREASING FACILITY ECONOMIC IMPACT IN THE AREAS CONCERNED AS WELL
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AS FURTHERING EFFORTS TO DEVELOP BAHAMIAN AGRICULTURE. EMBASSY WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT AND DEFENSE VIEW ON THIS SUBJECT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, MEETING REPORTS, MILITARY BASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NASSAU00128
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780029-0283
Format: TEL
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780150/aaaabpxb.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5b053ce2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NASSAU 1978
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3755739
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BASE COMMANDERS CONFERENCE, BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS
TAGS: MPOL, MASS, BF, TK, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5b053ce2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014